(b) whether similar reports have been received from other States also during the past three months, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the Government's response by way of checking this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) A statement showing the number of complaints received from various states in the last three months is annexured. (*See* below).

(c) While the complaints regarding illicit felling of trees are being dealt through State Governments, following steps are taken by Government of India to check illicit felling of trees:

(i) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was enacted to check the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes;

(ii) The State Governments have been asked to consider a ban on green felling of trees on hilly and mountainous regions above 1000 metres;

(iii) Guidelines have also been issued to the States to involve village communities in protection of forests on usufruct basis;

(iv) The G. B. Pant Himalayan institutes for Environment & Development is engaged in research and development studies.

(v) Export of timber has been banned.

(vi) Import of timber has been liberalised.

Statement

Rising Rate of Illegal Felling of Trees

Complaints regarding illicit felling of Trees in Last three Months—Statewise

Sl. No.	Name of the States	No. of complaint received
1.	Bihar	4
2.	Gujarat	1
3.	Haryana	1
4.	Madhya Pradesh	15
5.	Maharashtra	1
6.	Orissa	1
7.	Rajasthan	4
8.	Uttar Pradesh	16

Depletion of Forests

2746. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a task force to operate in different States for a limited period in extreme cases of environmental degradation with special reference to forests; and

(b) if so, whether Government would initiate such steps to retrieve lost forests and prevent further and total depletion of forest resources in different States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Ecological Task Forces have been set up for taking up eco-development and afforestation in difficult terrains. At present, three such Eco-Task Forces are operational in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir. The constitution of further eco-task forces is being considered but will depend on resourced availability.

Protests from some Communities against their dislocation from Rajaji National Park

2747. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a whether it is a fact that the Gujjars and other communities having a base in Rajaji National Park in Uttar Predesh have been protesting against their dislocation from the forest; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to meet the demands of these communities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) In order to protect the forest and wildlife in the Rajaji National Park and at the same time to improve the quality of life of Gujjars and to bring them into the main stream of social life